

The Turnaway Study Lecture Series

The Turnaway Study team of scientists from The University of California San Francisco have created a lecture series which examine the consequences of receiving versus being denied an abortion in the United States. Please find the course materials below including video lectures, suggested readings, and discussion questions. This material can also be found at www.turnawaystudy.com/the-course/.

Our team of public health researchers, sociologists, epidemiologists, social psychologists, economists, and demographers would like this series and its material to be interactive. We welcome suggestions for new discussion questions and we will share suggestions on the course website. If you have an online group discussion, a member of the study team may be able to join. Please email the course director Jasmine Powell with any questions or suggestions at jasmine.powell@ucsf.edu.

Introduction to the Turnaway Lecture Series

Suggested Readings:

1. [Foster, D. \(2020\). The Turnaway Study. Simon & Schuster.](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. How can students participate in this lecture series?
2. What do we learn from the stories in the book that is not covered in these lectures?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/dYmlyUXPTjw>

Lecture 1: Understanding the context and methods of the Turnaway Study

Suggested Readings:

1. Vignetta E. Charles et al., 2008 Contraception. Abortion and long-term mental health outcomes: A systematic review of the evidence. Contraception Volume 78, Issue 6, December 2008, Pages 436-450.
2. Dobkin LM, Gould H, Barar RE, Ferrari M, Weiss EI, Foster DG. Implementing a prospective study of women seeking abortion in the United States: understanding and overcoming barriers to recruitment. Womens Health Issues. 2014 Jan-Feb; 24(1):e115-23. PMID: 24439937

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the methodological challenges of studying abortion and mental health?
2. What are the three study groups in the Turnaway Study?
3. How many women are in the study and are they similar to the population of women seeking abortion nationally?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/vS2MAq7Y9nA>

Lecture 2: Why do women have (later) abortions

Suggested Readings:

1. Biggs MA, Gould H, Foster DG. Understanding why women seek abortions in the US. BMC Womens Health. 2013; 13:29. PMID: 23829590.
2. Foster DG, Kimport K. Who seeks abortions at or after 20 weeks? Perspect Sex Reprod Health. 2013 Dec; 45(4):210-8. PMID: 24188634

3. Upadhyay UD, Weitz TA, Jones RK, Barar RE, Foster DG. Denial of abortion because of provider gestational age limits in the United States. *Am J Public Health*. 2014 Sep; 104(9):1687-94. PMID: 23948000.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the most common reasons that women report for wanting to terminate a pregnancy?
2. How often do women receive abortions in the first trimester versus after 20 weeks?
3. What are some of the causes of delay of abortion seeking until later in pregnancy?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/V64hlzua9cA>

Lecture 3: Effects of Abortion on Women's Mental Health

Suggested Readings:

1. Biggs MA, Upadhyay UD, McCulloch CE, Foster DG. Women's Mental Health and Well-being 5 Years After Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion: A Prospective, Longitudinal Cohort Study. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2017 Feb 01; 74(2):169-178.
2. Biggs MA, Rowland B, McCulloch CE, Foster DG. Does abortion increase women's risk for post-traumatic stress? Findings from a prospective longitudinal cohort study. *BMJ Open*. 2016; 6(2):e009698.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the challenges in studying mental health consequences of abortion and abortion denial?
2. How does mental health differ between women who receive and women who are denied abortions? Are there differences over the long term?
3. What are some of the events which cause post traumatic stress symptoms and how do pregnancy and abortion figure in among them?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/j75jgliLTq4>

Lecture 4: The Emotions Women Experience After having an Abortion in the United States

Suggested Readings:

1. Rocca CH, Kimport K, Gould H, Foster DG. Women's emotions one week after receiving or being denied an abortion in the United States. *Perspect Sex Reprod Health*. 2013 Sep; 45(3):122-31. PMID: 24020773
2. Rocca CH, Samari G, Foster DG, Gould H, Kimport K. Emotions and decision rightness over five years following an abortion: An examination of decision difficulty and abortion stigma. *Soc Sci Med*. 2020 Jan 02; 112704. PMID: 31941577

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the emotions women express after having an abortion, both within days and years afterwards? Do women who receive an abortion feel that their decision was the right one for them?
2. The Turnaway Study shows that post-abortion emotions vary from woman to woman, largely as a function of life circumstances, difficulty with decision-making about their pregnancy, and experiences of stigma and social support. What are some aspects and conditions of your community that might affect a woman's emotions about her abortion, both immediately and years later?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/9hGlc5nuHOI>

Lecture 5: Physical Health Five Years After Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion

Suggested Readings:

1. Gerdtz C, Dobkin L, Foster DG, Schwarz EB. Side Effects, Physical Health Consequences, and Mortality Associated with Abortion and Birth after an Unwanted Pregnancy. *Womens Health Issues*. 2016 Jan-Feb; 26(1):55-9. PMID: 26576470

2. Ralph LJ, Schwarz EB, Grossman D, Foster DG. Self-reported Physical Health of Women Who Did and Did Not Terminate Pregnancy After Seeking Abortion Services: A Cohort Study. *Ann Intern Med.* 2019 Jun 11. PMID: 31181576

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the physical health risks associated with the end of pregnancy if the woman has an abortion versus gives birth?
2. How does the risk of continued pregnancy and childbirth affect women's self reported health over five years?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/KMTPzD-HLmU>

Lecture 6: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use Subsequent to Receiving vs Being Denied Abortion

Suggested Readings:

1. Roberts SCM, Foster DG, Gould H, Biggs MA. Changes in Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Over Five Years After Receiving Versus Being Denied a Pregnancy Termination. *J Stud Alcohol Drugs.* 2018 Mar; 79(2):293-301

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the differences in tobacco, alcohol and drug use between women who receive abortions and who are denied?
2. What are the causes of the differences? For which types of substance use do we not see differences by whether the woman received an abortion?

Video Lecture: https://youtu.be/D_Qy7dYvveM

Lecture 7: Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Received vs Are Denied Abortions in the US

Suggested Readings:

1. Foster DG, Biggs MA, Ralph L, Gerdtz C, Roberts S, Glymour MM. Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States. *Am J Public Health.* 2018 Mar; 108(3):407-413.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do the economic trajectories differ between women who receive and women who are denied abortions?
2. Is public assistance sufficient in providing basic living needs for low income women raising children?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/mCRwPIDY5Ck>

Lecture 8: The Effect of Receiving Versus Being Denied a Wanted Abortion on Educational Attainment

Suggested Readings:

1. Ralph LJ, Mauldon J, Biggs MA, Foster DG. A Prospective Cohort Study of the Effect of Receiving versus Being Denied an Abortion on Educational Attainment. *Womens Health Issues.* 2019 Nov 07.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the challenges in studying educational attainment differences between women who receive and women who are denied abortions?
2. What are some of the reasons that the Turnaway Study did not find differences between those who received and those who were denied abortions in graduation and dropping out of school?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/kOiu0hwR6Z8>

Lecture 9: Does Having an Abortion Enable Women to Achieve Their Life Plans

Suggested Readings:

1. Upadhyay UD, Biggs MA, Foster DG. The effect of abortion on having and achieving aspirational one-year plans. BMC Womens Health. 2015; 15(1):102. PMID: 26559911
2. McCarthy MA, Upadhyay U, Ralph L, Biggs MA, Foster DG. The effect of receiving versus being denied an abortion on making and achieving aspirational 5-year life plans. BMJ Sex Reprod Health. 2020 Feb 25. PMID: 32098771

Discussion Questions:

1. The researchers used the question, “How do you think your life will be different a year from now?” to assess one-year life aspirations. What are the advantages and disadvantages to asking in this way? If you were designing the study, what other questions would you ask to measure participants’ long-term goals?
2. The researchers found that individuals who received their wanted abortion were more likely to have positive life plans. Why do you think they found this? What factors may have influenced their visions for the future?

Video Lecture:

<https://youtu.be/zXZ11E22sw0>

Lecture 10: Adoption and the Turnaway Study

Suggested Readings:

1. Sisson G, Ralph L, Gould H, Foster DG. Adoption Decision Making among Women Seeking Abortion. Womens Health Issues. 2017 Jan 30

Discussion Questions:

1. How often do women denied abortions decide to place the child for adoption?
2. What are some of the considerations in their decision-making?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/Zec2gjHaqa8>

Lecture 11: Attitudes toward Abortion after Receiving or Being Denied a Wanted Abortion

Suggested Readings:

1. Woodruff K, Biggs MA, Gould H, Foster DG. Attitudes Toward Abortion After Receiving vs. Being Denied an Abortion in the USA. Sex Res Social Policy. 2018 Dec; 15(4):452-463. PMID: 30956717. PMCID: PMC6449855

Discussion Questions:

2. How does receiving versus being denied an abortion affect women’s attitudes toward the morality and legality of abortion?
3. What are some of the reasons that attitudes might change over time?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/QQ0x0mvoZTk>

Lecture 12: The Economic Consequences of Being Denied an Abortion

Suggested Readings:

1. Miller S, Wherry LR, Foster DG. (2020, January) The Economic Consequences of Being Denied an Abortion. Working Paper 26662, National Bureau of Economic Research

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the advantages of credit report data over survey data (women’s self-report)?

2. How do credit scores and indicators of economic hardship differ between those who received versus were denied abortions in the years prior to pregnancy and the years after?

Video Lecture: <https://youtu.be/T6EvmMGxpVQ>

Lecture 13: The Effect of Abortion Receipt or Denial on Women's Existing & Subsequent Children

Suggested Readings:

1. Foster DG, Raifman SE, Gipson JD, Rocca CH, Biggs MA. Effects of Carrying an Unwanted Pregnancy to Term on Women's Existing Children. *J Pediatr*. 2018 Oct 22. PMID: 30389101
2. Foster DG, Biggs MA, Raifman S, Gipson J, Kimport K, Rocca CH. Comparison of Health, Development, Maternal Bonding, and Poverty Among Children Born After Denial of Abortion vs After Pregnancies Subsequent to an Abortion. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2018 Sep 04. PMID: 30193363

Discussion Questions:

1. How does receiving versus being denied an abortion affect the children that women already have at the time of seeking an abortion?
2. What are the differences in wellbeing between the children born because a woman was denied an abortion and the children born from new pregnancies subsequent to an abortion?

Video Lecture: https://youtu.be/c_iOrydx3iE

Lecture 14: Intended Pregnancy and Intimate Relationships after Receiving vs. Being Denied a Wanted Abortion

Suggested Readings:

1. Upadhyay UD, Angel Aztlan-James E, Rocca CH, Foster DG. Intended pregnancy after receiving vs. being denied a wanted abortion. *Contraception*. 2018 Sep 20. PMID: 30244161
2. Moseson H, Foster DG, Upadhyay UD, Vittinghoff E, Rocca CH. Contraceptive Use over Five Years After Receipt Or Denial of Abortion Services. *Perspect Sex Reprod Health*. 2018 Mar; 50(1):7-14. PMID: 29329494
3. Aztlan EA, Foster DG, Upadhyay U. Subsequent Unintended Pregnancy Among US Women Who Receive or Are Denied a Wanted Abortion. *J Midwifery Womens Health*. 2018 Jan; 63(1):45-52. PMID: 29377521

Discussion Questions:

1. How does receiving versus being denied an abortion affect the chance of having a subsequent intended or unintended pregnancy in the next five years?
2. What are some of the reasons that the incidence of intended pregnancies might differ—intentions, access to contraception, life circumstances and achievement of fertility goals?

Video Lecture: Available soon at www.turnawaystudy.com/the-course/